AL-QUDS

THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

"It's rare to come across a work that is as comprehensive as it is compelling, as spiritually uplifting as it is historically rich. This book is a profound journey through sacred history, tracing the legacy of al-Quds – from the time of Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام to the modern era of occupation and struggle – through the lens of Quranic guidance, Prophetic wisdom, and well-researched historical context. What struck me most while reading this work was the author's sincerity and passion for the cause of Palestine and Masjid al-Aqsa. The dedication at the beginning alone moved me – it is clear that this is not just a book, but a labor of love, of faith, and of longing for justice. The author's ability to blend scholarship with spirituality, and history with relevance, makes this book both an educational resource and a source of moral and spiritual awakening.

— SHAYKH DR. FURHAN ZUBAIRI
(Dean, Institute of Knowledge, USA)

"History of al-Quds by Mohammad Zahid Mateen is a detailed and insightful work that not only traces the history of al-Quds but also brings out the lessons and benefits from each story and episode. The author connects the past to the present, showing readers how the trials, triumphs, and struggles of the Prophets and the Ummah hold direct relevance to our lives today. The book is clear, well-organized, and firmly rooted in authentic sources. It carries the heart of a true teacher – someone who seeks not just to inform, but to uplift, guide, and awaken a deeper sense of responsibility towards al-Quds and towards Islam itself.

— SHAYKH TARIQ APPLEBY
(Al-Nawawi Institute, Germany)

"Al-Quds holds a profoundly significant position in both Islamic and Israelite sacred history. To truly appreciate its significance, it is essential to understand the core principles that shape its story. Without this foundation, interpretations risk becoming confusing or misleading. This book, by our brother Mohammad Zahid, delivers precisely that: clear and essential insights derived from the Quran, authentic hadiths, and the views of early Muslim scholars. Written in a style reminiscent of classical historians such as al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr, the book presents a meticulously thoughtful and faithful approach to comprehending al-Quds. In undertaking this crucial endeavor, Mohammad Zahid has built a strong starting point for contemporary readers. His work renders a complex and often misunderstood history both accessible and profoundly meaningful. Beyond being a mere introduction, this book also functions as a powerful spiritual reminder, inviting readers to forge a deep connection with one of Islam's most revered and sacred sites.

—SHAYKH WISNU TANGGAP PRABOWO
(Researcher at the Center for ʿAqīdah Studies, IHKAM)

"Al-Quds is a city where past is firmly intertwined with the present. Being the first Qiblah and the place of Miʿrāj of the Prophet, it is the seat of spiritual and worldly elevation, which has seen diverse nations and civilizations competing to control its reigns. The current political and military climate in the region should once again compel the Muslim mind to acquaint itself with the importance of al-Quds by intellectually engaging with understanding its history and extracting lessons for the future strategy of the Ummah.

The author of this work, Mohammad Zahid, has fulfilled this *kifāyah* obligation for the English-speaking readers by articulating such a clear and well-organized book. I know him as a younger brother and a genuine student of *ʿilm* from more a decade now and I am witness to his vigor and hard work in understanding and practice. I ask Allāh سبحانه وتعالى to grant him more *tawfīq* in serving the Ummah and accept all our efforts for His sake. Āmīn.

— SHAYKH DR. SHUAYB WANI
(Director, Dār al-ʿIlm Institute, Istanbul)

Mohammad Zahid Ibn Tariq

AL-QUDS

THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

The Chronicles of Bani Israel

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For suggestions and comments:
dakwahcornerpublications
@gmail.com

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Dakwah Corner Bookstore
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TO MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN PALESTINE,

This small work is dedicated to you. Like the legacy of ʿUmar al-Fārūq رضي الله عنه that clearly demarcated truth and falsehood, you have stood strong in the Blessed Land and torn the mask from the powers of the world that claim to be flag-bearers of peace while their hands are dripping in blood. You have taught us Muslims the true meaning of completely relying on Allāh, the power of *Īmān*, and living with honor while holding your head high.

I feel ashamed and don't have words for not being able to do much to help you and respond adequately to your call. Our Prophet ﷺ taught us, "Whoever among you sees evil, let him change it with his hand. If he cannot do so, then with his tongue. If he cannot do so, then with his heart, which is the weakest level of faith." I hope this small effort to educate the Muslims and the world at large is a small step towards reviving the Ummah, helping Palestine, and becoming a means of freeing Masjid al-Aqsa from the clutches of the occupation.

A small stone was enough for Prophet Dāwūd عليه السلام to overcome Jālūt and it's the small stones that start an avalanche. May Allāh Accept this small stone moved in the path towards a free Palestine.

Publisher's Note

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Jerusalem – al-Quds – is far more than a city etched in ancient stone; it stands as a living testament to our profound spiritual legacy. It is the sacred ground where the call of Tawḥīd reverberated through the voices of the Prophets, and a timeless witness to divine revelation, enduring resistance, and continuous revival across the ages.

For a considerable time, we earnestly sought – with hope guiding our hearts – the ideal material that would enable us to fulfill our duty towards al-Quds, a land imbued with profound significance for every believing soul. We extended our reach to esteemed voices – including writers, scholars, and passionate activists from Jerusalem – yearning to forge something truly meaningful for this sacred cause. Regrettably, we did not encounter the response we had anticipated. The silence was particularly poignant, given that the cause is so noble, urgent, and undeniably deserving of our united voices and collective efforts.

This book, *History of al-Quds* by Mohammad Zahid Mateen, transcends a mere chronicle of historical events. It serves as a potent reminder that remembering Jerusalem is not an act of nostalgia; rather, it is an act of worship, a steadfast assertion of truth, and a reclamation of our sacred memory. It guides readers on an immersive journey through time, where each step retraces the paths of the Prophets, and every chapter summons us back to our origins as an Ummah bound by faith, justice, and shared responsibility.

We are truly honored to publish this timely and indispensable work. With a masterful blend of scholarly depth and heartfelt sincerity, the author seamlessly connects the past to the present, impressing upon us that al-Quds is not merely a subject for history books but a living trust that demands our unwavering awareness, resolute commitment, and decisive action. Through meticulous research and profound spiritual insight, he illuminates the lessons of the Prophets, unveils the sanctity of al-Aqsa, and celebrates the unwavering fortitude of those who continue to protect it.

The endorsements from a diverse array of respected scholars, historians, activists, and imams underscore the significance and urgent relevance of

this book. It offers invaluable clarity and inspiration during a time when both are desperately needed.

Among the special features of this book is the inclusion of rare and captivating photographs of Masjid al-Aqsa and al-Quds, captured exclusively by Brother Muhsin Kelby رحمه الله . These extraordinary images – many unveiled here for the very first time – offer readers a profound visual journey into the sacred beauty, timeless majesty, and enduring spirit of Jerusalem.

The first draft of this book was presented for review to a distinguished scholar from Gaza, who expressed amazement at its depth and structure. He passed away before he could contribute further to the project. May Allāh have Mercy on him.

As bombs continue to fall on Gaza and cries for justice resound across the globe, the brazen Zionist aggression has transcended all limits, with the so-called champions of civilization enabling the bloodshed of countless innocent lives. Amidst this grim reality, this book emerges as a beacon for all who seek to understand, to remember, and to act with unwavering faith and integrity.

It is our sincere prayer that this work will revive hearts, enlighten minds, and ignite within a new generation the love to learn about and steadfastly defend al-Quds with knowledge, wisdom, and unshakeable *Īmān*.

May Allāh accept this humble endeavor and make it a great source of benefit for all who read it – each engagement a contribution towards the noble cause of freeing al-Quds, a future in which we firmly believe.

Farid Abu Ahmed
Dakwah Corner Bookstore
Thursday, 22 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1446 AH / 19 June 2025 CE

Foreword

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Jerusalem – al-Quds – is not merely a city. It is the soul of sacred history, the echo of revelation, and the flame that continues to burn in the heart of the Ummah. From being the first Qiblah to the site of the Isrā' and Mi'rāj, it holds a central place in Islam's worldview – its creed, its history, and its future. And today, more than ever, its story must be told.

I was honored to read this blessed work on the city of Jerusalem – a city that continues to reside in the heart and memory, and which represents, in the conscience of the Ummah, a symbol of steadfastness, sanctity, and the struggle for dignity. What you have written in this book is not merely a historical account of a city, but rather a revival of a cause, a renewal of a covenant, and a bridge built between a noble past and a struggling present.

As a son of Gaza, where the air is heavy with sorrow but the spirit remains unbroken, I write these words with deep love and a heart weighed down with grief for Jerusalem. This book is not just a historical record; it is an act of resistance, a reminder, and a revival of hearts. It reclaims the sacred story of a land that has long been misunderstood and stripped of its true meaning.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ described Jerusalem with remarkable precision, despite never having seen it completely with his eyes. This was among his miracles and a proof of his prophethood. His Night Journey not only honored the land, but made it part of our Islamic creed. This is the city of the prophets – where more than 25 messengers walked and prayed – granting it a profound and lasting sanctity for Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Your words touched upon the truth, and your style bore the trust with honesty. This work deserves to be read – not merely for knowledge – but out of duty, by every human being who still values truth and dignity.

This book offers more than a timeline of conquests and conflicts over Jerusalem and Masjid al-Aqsa. It portrays Jerusalem as a place where divine messages descended, where empires collapsed and others rose, and where the hearts of believers have always turned. From the days of Prophets Ya'qūb, Dāwūd, Sulaymān, Zakarīyā, and Yaḥyá عليهم السلام, to the bravery of those who reclaimed it after the Crusades, to the sincere defenders resisting the colonial

divisions of our modern era – this book tells the truth: Jerusalem has always been a test of faith, courage, and responsibility.

Today, as bombs rain down on Gaza and its children are buried beneath the rubble, we must ask ourselves: What does Jerusalem mean to us now? The war on Gaza is intricately bound to the fate of Jerusalem. They are deeply connected – one bleeding, the other shackled by chains and occupation.

This book comes at a time of great sorrow, but also of great clarity – for those whose hearts are alive. It challenges indifference, refutes false narratives, and calls us back to the roots of our faith and the spirit of our Ummah.

I was pleased with your kind invitation to write the introductory foreword for this book, and I am even more pleased to place my name at the forefront of a work I consider vital for anyone who believes in truth and feels the significance of Jerusalem – no matter how distant they may be.

Let this book be a reminder and a revival – for Jerusalem is not exclusive to Palestinians. It is a sacred trust carried by every Muslim. It is a symbol of resistance against injustice and a place where faith, history, and hope meet.

To read this book is to connect with our past, to stand firm in our present, and to hope for a future in which justice returns to the Holy Land. May it awaken hearts, guide minds, and move us to act.

O Allāh, protect Jerusalem, free Gaza, and unite us upon the truth.

Shaykh Dr. Ibrahim A. Dremali
Tuesday, 7 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1446 AH / 3 June 2025 CE

Foreword

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

Al-Quds (Jerusalem) holds a central and irreplaceable place in the faith, history, and consciousness of Muslims. It is home to Masjid al-Aqsa, the first Qiblah of Islam and the third holiest sanctuary after Makkah and Madīnah. For many decades, the place has not only been under the brutal Israeli military occupation but also under a sustained machination of disinformation and misinformation to distort the historical facts, ground realities, and the just cause of the Palestinian freedom struggle. In such a scenario, *History of al-Quds: The Chronicles of Bani Israel* by Mohammad Zahid Ibn Tariq is a relevant and deeply thoughtful contribution to contemporary Islamic historical writing. The book succeeds in doing what many works on Jerusalem struggle to achieve: it presents a coherent historical narrative while remaining methodologically rooted in classical Islamic scholarship.

One of the book's greatest strengths lies in its methodological balance. The author carefully integrates Quranic verses, authentic hadiths, and responsibly selected historical reports without allowing any single source to overshadow the epistemic authority of the Quran and Sunnah. This approach reflects scholarly maturity and adherence to Islamic standards. The content is presented in a clear, accessible style, making complex historical developments intelligible for both academic and general readers. By tracing the relationship between Bani Israel, al-Quds, and divine testing, the author effectively transforms history into practical reflection. The work consistently reminds the reader that the Quranic discourse on Bani Israel is not merely descriptive but profoundly instructive for the Muslim Ummah. Equally commendable is the author's ability to connect past and present without resorting to polemics.

One of the most commendable aspects of the author's work is his clear, principled, and evidence-based dismantling of popular misconceptions surrounding resistance, particularly the false claim that boycotts are ineffective or merely symbolic. Rather than appealing to emotion alone, the author grounds his argument in Islamic history, jurisprudence, and rational analysis, demonstrating that economic and social boycotts are neither novel nor

reactionary tools. He shows how boycotts have been Islamically sanctioned and strategically employed in earlier periods of Muslim history as a legitimate means of opposing injustice when direct confrontation was not possible. By situating contemporary boycotts within this well-established Islamic framework, the author restores confidence in their intellectual and practical value. His method is especially effective in shifting the discussion from despair to disciplined action, proposing to readers a realistic and faith-rooted strategy for the present and future. This balanced approach – combining textual evidence, historical precedent, and strategic foresight – makes the work both intellectually convincing and deeply empowering for conscientious readers. The discussion of Jerusalem's sanctity, Prophetic legacy, and contemporary suffering is framed with dignity, restraint, intellectual honesty, and spiritual urgency. Rather than inciting emotional reaction alone, the author calls for knowledge-based action, *tawakkul*, comprehensive reform, and intellectual responsibility.

Overall, *History of al-Quds* is not simply a historical account of a city; it is a work of remembrance, reflection, and renewal. It will be of particular value to students of Islamic history, international relations, conflict studies, educators, and readers seeking a principled understanding of Jerusalem grounded in profound scholarship, academic subtlety, and objective clarity. The book serves as a meaningful and worthy contribution to the growing body of Islamic literature on al-Quds. I extend my heartfelt gratitude and deep appreciation to my dear Brother Mohammad Zahid for this sincere, courageous, and intellectually honest contribution. His work reflects not only intellectual fervor but also a profound sense of responsibility toward the Ummah. I sincerely pray that Allāh accept this noble effort, place immense *barakah* in it, and make it a means of *ṣadaqah jāriyah* for the author. May Allāh grant him strength, sincerity, and continued *tawfīq* to produce rich, meaningful literature that benefits Muslims at large, revives consciousness, and guides future generations toward truth, justice, and principled action. *Āmīn*.

Shaykh Sajad Ahmad Mir
Sunday, 23 Jumādá al-Ākhirah 1447 AH / 14 December 2025 CE

Introduction

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All types of thanks and praise belong to Allāh, the most worthy of thanks and praise. A praise superior to all other types of praise, like the superiority of Allāh over all of His creation. All praise belongs to Allāh who bestows understanding of the Dīn upon whom He wills from His servants, and grants success to those obedient to Him. All praise is due to Him who directed mankind to recognize His Existence through His signs and left them no excuse to disobey Him as He conveyed His message to humanity through His Messengers عليهم السلام, the best of His creation. I bear witness that nothing deserves to be worshipped except Allāh alone, and I bear witness that Muḥammad ﷺ is His slave and Messenger. May Allāh bestow blessings upon him, his family, and his companions as long as the clouds bring about rain and as long as the thunder comes after the lightning.

It is very important for us as Muslims to learn, connect, understand, and reflect upon our history. In the vast tapestry of human existence, history stands as a testament to the journey of civilizations, the struggles of individuals, and the evolution of societies. Studying history is not just about memorizing names, dates, and key places where something occurred. Beyond its role as a mere record of events, history holds profound significance as a teacher, a guide, and a source of wisdom for those who seek to understand the world around them.

The importance of reading and reflecting on history cannot be overstated. To understand what is going on today, we need to understand what happened in the past. Why? The past has shaped our present, and our present will shape the future. Studying history helps us to find our own identity and understand our own selves better. In reality, we are reliving history. Learning history helps you appreciate what you have inherited, and it helps you understand people both around you and in the extended community. Learning from history helps us avoid falling into the same mistakes again. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ beautifully summed it up when he said, "The believer is not stung from the same hole twice." [Al-Bukhārī]

When setting out to read more about Bani Israel, Masjid al-Aqsa, and Palestine, I was faced with a slight dilemma. Most books were either too

focused on Tafsīr, where it was very easy for the reader to lose track, as the stories are usually broken and spread across the Quran, or they were written from a heavy orientalist lens and did not do justice to us Muslims. This book is a short attempt to present in a narrative style, the story of Bani Israel, the establishment of Jerusalem, and Masjid al-Aqsa, the third holiest site in Islam, all the way from inception till date.

In this book, we have quoted extensively from the Quran and authentic narrations from the Sunnah. Where needed, we have also quoted from the Isrā'īliyāt (Judeo-Christian sources) to support the narrations or give additional context to help the reader get a better picture of how events unfolded. Abdullāh ibn ʿAmr ﵄ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Convey (my teachings) to the people even if it were a single sentence, and narrate the stories of Bani Israel, for it is not sinful to do so. And whoever tells a lie on me intentionally, will surely take his place in the (Hell) Fire." [Al-Bukhārī] It is well known that Abdullāh ibn ʿAmr ﵄ discovered two loads of books of the Ahl al-Kitāb (People of the Scripture) on the Day of Yarmūk, and he would occasionally narrate from them.

This is, of course, provided there is no contradiction to the Sharīʿah. This is why we see that Abū Hurayrah ﵁ narrated that the Ahl al-Kitāb (Jews) used to recite the Tawrāh in Hebrew and explain it in Arabic to the Muslims. On that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "Do not believe the People of the Scripture or disbelieve them, but say, 'We believe in Allāh and what is revealed to us.'" (Sūrat al-Baqarah, 2:136)" [Al-Bukhārī]

Commenting on the hadith, "Narrate from Bani Israel, there is no sin in it", Imam al-Shāfiʿī ﵀ said, "It is well known that the Prophet ﷺ did not permit the narration of what is known to be falsehood. Rather, he only allowed the narrations from those who narrated them when their truthfulness or falsehood was unknown, but he did not permit it from those who were known to be liars." [Al-Risālah]

Thus, the meaning of the hadith, "Narrate from Bani Israel," refers to that which is not falsehood. And his statement, "There is no sin in it," means that there is no restriction in you narrating from them now. This is because the reports of restriction and censure on narrating from them and looking into their books were, in the beginning, then the ruling became relaxed. This is not for everyone, rather only for those that have a deep understanding of the religion and have the ability to distinguish between the truth and falsehood as Abdullāh ibn ʿAmr ﵄ did when he discovered two loads from the Ahl al-Kitab and would narrate from them only that which the Sharīʿah permitted." [Isrā'īliyāt wa atharuhā]

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah ﷺ said in his *Muqaddimah fī Uṣūl al-Tafsīr*, "However, these Isrā'īliyāt traditions are to be quoted as supporting evidence and not as primary sources. Isrā'īliyāt traditions are of three types: first, authentic as attested by our own sources; second, false as attested by our own sources; and third, that which does not fall into the two previous categories, where we cannot judge them to be authentic or inauthentic. One is allowed to quote from this third type as justified previously, and the majority of these Isrā'īlī traditions are contained in matters with no immediate Islamic religious benefit..."

To close this matter, Imam Ibn Kathīr ﷺ stated in his *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, "We do not record the Isrā'īliyāt except those which the Lawgiver has permitted, i.e. those which do not contradict the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ. These are stories which are neither believed nor belied, and they have been recorded because they provide details of unclarified narratives that we have, or they provide names for people and places that have only been mentioned in passing in our Revelation, due to there being no benefit in specifying them for us. Thus, we have reported them in order to provide extra detail and not with the intention of citing them as evidence or placing any reliance on them. Only the Book of Allāh and the authentic Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ may be relied upon and depended upon. It is from Allāh that we seek help, and it is He in Whom we place our trust; there is no help and no power except in Allāh, the All-Powerful, the Most Wise, the Most High, the Almighty."

We also hope that the reader takes this opportunity to reflect and learn from the stories of the Prophets of Allāh عليهم السلام who were sent to Bani Israel. That being said, our Imam, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal ﷺ said, "Three things have no *isnād*: Tafsīr, Malāḥim (narrations about the Last Hour), and Maghāzī (stories from the Sīrah, especially battles). This is because most of their narrations are of the *mursal* type, such as narrations reported by ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr, al-Shaʿbī, al-Zuhrī, Mūsā ibn ʿUqbah and Ibn Isḥāq." [Majmūʿ al-Fatāwá]

Why write about Jerusalem? It is famously said that the heart of the Ummah is al-Shām. The heart of al-Shām is Palestine. The heart of Palestine is Jerusalem, and the heart of Jerusalem is Masjid al-Aqsa. Others say Masjid al-Haram denotes our relationship with Allāh. Masjid al-Nabawi denotes our relationship with Allāh's Messenger ﷺ. Masjid al-Aqsa denotes our relationship as an Ummah. So anytime one wants to feel the pulse of the Ummah, one can see the condition of Jerusalem, and they will get an idea. May Allāh Aid us.

Why write about Bani Israel? Firstly, because they are closely connected to Masjid al-Aqsa and, more importantly, because there is a reason that Allāh has mentioned Bani Israel so many times across the Quran. The name Israel occurs 43 times in the Quran. Twice referring to Prophet Israel (i.e. Yaʿqūb) ﷺ himself and the rest to Bani Israel, the progeny of Prophet Israel ﷺ. It is for us to learn from their mistakes. It also gives us an immense boost and a glimpse at the Mercy of Allāh. As you read through these upcoming pages, at the back of your mind, I want you to reflect upon the multiple times that Bani Israel engaged in outright disobedience, and yet Allāh gave them a chance to repent and start anew.

If we start reading the Quran from the beginning till Sūrat al-Aʿrāf alone, we will be surprised that Bani Israel can be forgiven despite the kind of transgression and crimes they had committed. Yet Allāh tells them to turn back to Him, for He is the Most Forgiving and Most Merciful.

At any moment, we are welcome back to Allāh. Look at the way Allāh opens the doors for penance and atonement regardless of what the person might have done in the past and no matter how far they have transgressed. Many times, people are given a very harsh image of Islam and Allāh. The doors of repentance are open till just before one sees the angel of death, or before his soul reaches his throat, or the sun rises from the West.

Allāh says,

قُلْ يَٰعِبَادِيَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا۟ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا۟ مِن رَّحْمَةِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ ٱلذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلْغَفُورُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥٣﴾

Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves (by sinning), do not despair of the Mercy of Allāh. Indeed, Allāh Forgives ALL sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." [Sūrat al-Zumar, 39:53]

In the *āyah* above, we learn about *isrāf* (from أَسْرَفُوا), which means to exceed the limits excessively and inordinately. People, at times, say that there is hardly a sin that they have not committed. Of course, there are many sins that they didn't commit, but it's a way of showing the large number of sins they might have indulged in. How it works is that for every sin that is committed and repented from, Allāh adds in place of that a reward instead. Allāh says,

إِلَّا مَن تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَٰلِحًا فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ ٱللَّهُ سَيِّـَٔاتِهِمْ حَسَنَٰتٍ ۗ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿٧٠﴾

As for those who repent, believe, and do good deeds, they are the ones whose evil deeds Allāh will change into good deeds. For Allāh is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. [Sūrat al-Furqān, 25:70]

This is an incentive from Allāh for those who wrongly think that if they want to come back to Allāh, they will not be accepted because they have committed too many sins. There is no such thing as too many sins that cannot be forgiven. No matter how far off a person has strayed, as long as they turn back to Allāh, they will find Him ready to Accept them back.

Allāh says,

وَتِلْكَ ٱلْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

And We present these examples to mankind so that they might reflect. [Sūrat al-Ḥashr, 59:21]

Commenting on this, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Saʿdī رحمه الله said, "Allāh then informs us that He strikes examples for mankind and makes the Halal and Haram clear for His slaves in His Book so that they might reflect and ponder over His *Āyāt*. Reflecting on them opens up the treasures of knowledge for the slave and makes the pathways of good and evil clear to him. It also encourages him to have good character and excellent traits, as well as restraining him from poor character. So there is nothing more beneficial for a slave than reflecting and pondering over the Quran and its messages." [Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥmān]

Anas ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "Allāh is more pleased with the repentance of His servant than one of you who has lost his camel on a journey in an empty desert while it carried his food and drink. Having lost hope, he lies down in the shade and despairs over his camel, but all of a sudden, he finds the camel standing over him. He takes hold of its reins and out of joy he proclaims, 'O Allāh, you are my servant, and I am your Lord.' He makes a mistake due to his extreme joy." [Muslim]

Our Shaykh, Dr. Ibrahim Nuhu حفظه الله said, "Calamities are a warning from Allāh. It is Allāh informing the people that Allāh's Laws or Commands are being disobeyed. The cycle for a sinner is such that committing one sin opens the door to another sin. This is a punishment from Allāh. When a person sins, they should realize their mistake and return back to Allāh in repentance.

Whenever you are suffering, look into your relationship with Allāh. Allāh has promised us good, but what matters is that we do our part of the deal. Allāh asks for only two things in return for success: *Īmān* and putting that *Īmān* into action. Allāh promises to take care of all of a person's worries when the hereafter becomes their primary worry. Tell me this: how is it possible for a person to fail in life when Allāh is looking after his affairs? Make sure you take care of your ʿAqīdah, and your *Īmān*, and try to keep perfecting

your relationship with Allāh."

As I write these pages, the past few months have been really heavy upon the Ummah, as with every minute we hear devastating news coming in about our brothers and sisters from around the world, especially in Palestine. As our elders and scholars deal with things at their level, I would like to raise a few points for our youth to ponder over:

1. All over social media, we have been seeing posts on the lines of, "If only we had Khālid ibn al-Walīd رضي الله عنه today." Though I completely understand where this is coming from, we need to pause and take a step back. Two points I would like to raise here: one is from an *'aqīdah* angle of having trust in Allāh, and the second is actually following in the footsteps of Khālid ibn al-Walīd رضي الله عنه.

    a. This statement is not something new. This was said so many times during the caliphate of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه to such an extent that 'Umar al-Fārūq رضي الله عنه eventually removed Khālid رضي الله عنه from his position, as people began attributing victory to Khālid رضي الله عنه instead of Allāh. This is, of course, not taking away anything from the legend that is Khālid ibn al-Walīd رضي الله عنه. Rather, it is to remind ourselves that all these heroes are just agents of success, and success is not because of them. True success is from Allāh alone.
    b. During the battle against the Tartars, the Sultan exclaimed, looking at the large numbers of the Tartar army, "Yā Khālid ibn al-Walīd!" On hearing this, Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah رحمه الله corrected him and said, "Do not say this, rather say 'Ya Allāh,' and seek the help of Allāh, the One Lord who alone can give victory, and say 'O The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense, You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help.' " At the end of the day, the Muslims emerged victorious even though the odds were severely against them.
    c. Secondly, we need to walk the talk as well. Khālid رضي الله عنه was a man of action. In Israel, young men and women have to do a mandatory three years of military service. Their entire population is battle-ready and physically fit to a certain degree. The largest number of startups and doctorate holders are based in or emerging from Israel. Simple question: Where are we in comparison to our degree of preparation, and what steps are we taking to be fit both physically and intellectually?

2. We talk much about Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī رحمه الله and his heroics in liberating al-Quds as well. Rightly so. What else do we know about him? Is he there just to be an Islamic superman that we refer to in such instances, or do we study and learn from his blueprint of success? Do we know how he honored and supported the scholars? Do we know how he exerted himself in studying and gaining knowledge? When his army moved, it had within it the likes of Shaykh al-Ḥanābilah Muwaffaq al-Dīn Ibn Qudāmah رحمه الله and other scholars. Do we even know who our scholars are locally, and what our connection is with them?

Ustādh Muzzammil Ahmed حفظه الله beautifully said, "History is a book written by a handful of men and their deeds. While most remain engrossed in merely browsing the pages of the past and present open in front of them, the wise grab hold of their quills and start etching the future that will ultimately find itself on display when the pages are turned."

Numbers have hardly ever been on the side of Muslims when confronted in battle, except in a few cases. This shows us that it's more about the quality rather than the quantity. The reason such small numbers could take on and emerge victorious against impossible numbers of the opposition was *tawakkul* (faith and reliance). Complete faith in the Promise of Allāh, utmost sincerity of intention and more importantly, following the commandments of the Prophet ﷺ without question. They coupled that with *ḥarakah* (movement) to get *barakah* because we are taught to tie the camel before we leave things to Allāh. Contrast that to what we are today – large in numbers but hardly any quality, looking for loopholes to get around our obligations.

Our Shaykh, Dr. Sajid Umar حفظه الله advises us that even today – yes, even today – if we are sincere in our intention and completely rely upon the aid of Allāh alone and put in the work, Allāh out of His immense mercy will send down angels to help us in our difficulties.

Our Shaykh, Dr. Ibrahim Nuhu حفظه الله said, "Those who depend on Allāh with utmost *taqwá* and *tawakkul*, Allāh promises to increase them in *rizq*, fulfil all their desired plans, and elevate them in their rankings, provided they show patience in the process."

Always remember the statement of Imam Ibn Rajab رحمه الله while we work. He said, "Having patience while waiting for relief is a form of worship since hardship never lasts." [Majmū' Rasā'il]

Shaykh Dr. Ekrima Sai'd Sabri حفظه الله, the Grand Imām of Masjid al-Aqsa, advised us in Kuala Lumpur, "Masjid al-Aqsa is more than a masjid. It bears

a rich history and spiritual legacy that transcends time. It is the first Qiblah for Muslims. It's also the place where the events of Isrā' and Mi'rāj unfolded, in which our Prophet ﷺ travelled from the Earth to the heavens and back to convey the Message of Allāh. It's good to show love towards Palestine, but remember that we have the power to do more. We must make an effort to learn the history behind how Palestine was occupied, so we understand the struggles of our Palestinian brothers and sisters."

Another reason that gives me pleasure to be a part of this is because of a treasured family legacy. Based on family records, our family traces our lineage back to the Ṣaḥābī, 'Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit رضي الله عنه, through his son Muḥammad from Umm Ḥarām bint Milhān رضي الله عنها from Banu Najjar. [Zikr-e-Aḥsan] 'Ubādah was appointed as the first Chief Judge of Jerusalem by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه. The couple settled in Palestine, where he taught the people the Quran and the hadiths of the Prophet ﷺ.

The Prophet ﷺ taught us, "Whoever does not thank people has not thanked Allāh." [Abū Dāwūd] I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Salman Mujahid, Khalid Hussain, Saada Bello, Khidr Nasir, Zaf Abbas, and Shafa Tasneem for their invaluable comments and insightful feedback on the initial manuscript, which greatly enriched this book. I would like to thank my teachers, Shaykh Dr. Ibrahim Nuhu, Shaykh Maqsoodul Hasan Faizi, Shaykh Zafarul Hasan Madani, Shaykh Kamil Ahmed, and Shaykh Dr. Ahsan Hanif حفظهم الله for simplifying matters and guiding me via their many works. Additionally, I am deeply grateful to the GlobalSadaqah team for providing a platform and for affording me the opportunity to contribute to the cause of Palestine for nearly a decade. Last, but certainly not least, I thank my parents for their unending encouragement and steadfast presence throughout all my projects and endeavors. Their unwavering support has been my pillar of strength. May Allāh Accept the meager deeds we do for His sake.

Mohammad Zahid Mateen
Monday, 1 Ramadan 1446H / 1 March 2025
Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

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◆ 1 ◆

THE VIRTUES OF MASJID AL-AQSA AND AL-SHĀM

The Virtues of al-Quds

Masjid al-Aqsa is one of the three greatest masjids in Islam. It ranks third after Masjid al-Haram in Makkah and Masjid al-Nabawi in Madīnah. It is the only masjid mentioned in the Quran by name other than Masjid al-Haram. It was the first Qiblah of the Muslims. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ prayed for more of his life towards Masjid al-Aqsa than he did towards the Ka'bah when the Qiblah was changed after his migration to Madīnah. The land of al-Aqsa, or al-Quds, is known as Jerusalem to the Christians and Jews. This land is considered sacred as well as blessed in their religions. It was the land of the Prophets of Allāh عليهم السلام. Add to that, all three religions believe it to be the site where the events leading to the End of the World will unfold.

Al-Quds is at the heart of the larger blessed land of al-Shām, which refers to the lands that include modern-day Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Northeast Egypt, Southwest Turkey, parts of Northwest Saudi Arabia, and some nearby areas around them. Allāh immortalized the mention of Jerusalem and Masjid al-Aqsa till the Day of Judgment when He told us,

سُبْحَٰنَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِۦ لَيْلًا مِّنَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْأَقْصَا ٱلَّذِى بَٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنْ ءَايَٰتِنَآ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ ۝١

Glory be to the One who Took His Servant (Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ) by night from Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have Blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing. [Sūrat al-Isrā', 17:1]

Al-Isrā' wa al-Mi'rāj is one of the greatest signs and miracles that were given to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ after the Quran. Al-Isrā' refers to his Night Journey from Makkah to Jerusalem, and al-Mi'rāj refers to his Ascension into the Heavens.

Linguistically, *quds* (Al-Quds being the definitive) refers to a sanctified or purified place. By purified, it could refer to the fact that oppressors or evil

people will never manage to take control of it. We see throughout history that the different waves of the Crusaders, the Mongols that shook the world, the mighty armies of Napoleon Bonaparte, and many others – all met their match in Palestine. This practice of rooting out injustice and oppression from Palestine will continue till it reaches its pinnacle with the return of Prophet ʿĪsá ﷺ, the true Messiah, who will put an end to the Dajjāl or the Anti-Christ and establish a Kingdom of Justice upon Islam.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Do not travel (specifically) to any masjid except three: Masjid al-Haram, Masjid al-Aqsa, and this masjid of mine." [Al-Bukhārī]

At the time of this hadith, Masjid al-Aqsa was not under Muslim control. This was a form of prophecy and a positive mindset of the Prophet ﷺ that was shared with his companions.

There is a consensus (*ijmāʿ*) of the scholars that there is a special reward for praying in Masjid al-Aqsa. It was narrated that Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه said, "We were discussing when we were with the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, which is better, the Masjid of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ or Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, 'One prayer in my masjid is better than four prayers offered there (in Bayt al-Maqdis), and what a good place of prayer it is. Soon there will come a time when, if a man has a piece of land the size of a horse's rope from which he can see Bayt al-Maqdis, that will be better for him than the whole world." [Mustadrak al-Ḥākim]

Along with mentioning the reward of praying there, we see another prediction being made by our Prophet ﷺ. This hadith also indicates that towards the end of time, it will be difficult for Muslims to pray in Masjid al-Aqsa.

ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Zubayr رضي الله عنهما narrated that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "Offering prayer in my masjid (in Madīnah) is better than one thousand prayers elsewhere, save for those offered in Masjid al-Haram (in Makkah). And prayer offered in Masjid al-Haram is better than prayer offered in my mosque by one hundred prayers." [Aḥmad]

Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh رضي الله عنهما narrated that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "One prayer in my Masjid is better than one thousand prayers elsewhere, except the al-Masjid al-Haram, and one prayer in al-Masjid al-Haram is better than one hundred thousand prayers elsewhere." [Ibn Mājah]

From these narrations, we can easily compute that the reward for one prayer in Masjid al-Haram equals a hundred thousand prayers, and the reward for one prayer offered in Masjid al-Aqsa is equivalent to two hundred and fifty prayers.

Abū al-Dardā' ﵁ relates that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The prayer prayed in Masjid al-Haram is akin to one hundred thousand prayers, and the prayer in my masjid is akin to one thousand prayers, and the prayer in Jerusalem is akin to five hundred prayers." [Al-Ṭabarānī]

Some other narrations, like the one above, suggest that the reward is five hundredfold, but InshaAllah, the narrations that mentioned the reward as two hundred fifty are more authentic.

Maymūnah bint Sa'd ﵂ narrated, "I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, tell us the legal injunction about (visiting) Bayt al-Muqaddas.' The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, 'It is the land of the gathering and the Resurrection. Go there and pray, for one prayer in it is like a thousand prayers elsewhere.' She said, 'What if I cannot endure traveling there?' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Let one send a gift of oil to light its lamps, for whoever does so, it is as if he has gone there.'" [Sharḥ Mushkil al-Āthār] This narration was authenticated by Shaykh al-Arna'ūṭ ﵀.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "Whoever begins 'Umrah from Bayt al-Maqdis will have an expiation for all his previous sins." [Ibn Ḥibbān]

There is a slight weakness in the chain of this narration. We see from the actions of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ, like Ibn 'Umar ﵄ and many others from among them, that they donned *iḥrām* for 'Umrah from Masjid al-Aqsa.

Ibn 'Abbās ﵄ added, "Bayt al-Maqdis was built by the Prophets and inhabited by the Prophets. There is not the area of a single hand span except that a Prophet prayed in it or an angel stood on it." [Aḥmad and al-Tirmidhī]

Despite its high standing, it is important to note that Masjid al-Aqsa is not a Ḥaram (sanctuary) in the technical sense of the word as Makkah and Madīnah are. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī ﵁ said, "The Prophet ﷺ said, 'O Allah, Ibrāhīm made Makkah sacred and made it a sanctuary, and I have made Madīnah a sanctuary... no blood is to be shed therein, no weapon for fighting is to be carried, and no tree is to be struck to make its leaves fall, except to provide food for animals" [Muslim]

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah ﵀ said, "Bayt al-Maqdis is not a place that can be called a ḥaram (sanctuary), nor is the tomb of al-Khalīl or any other place on earth, except for al-Ḥaram of Makkah, which is a sanctuary according to the consensus of the Muslims and al-Ḥaram of Madīnah, which is a sanctuary according to the majority of scholars. [Majmū' al-Fatāwá]

Allah tells us,

سُبْحَٰنَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِۦ لَيْلًا مِّنَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْأَقْصَا ٱلَّذِى بَٰرَكْنَا

حَوْلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنْ ءَايَٰتِنَآ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ ۝١

Glory be to the One who Took His Servant (Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ) by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have Blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing. [Sūrat al-Isrā', 17:1]

An important point to note here is that the term "masjid" was known prior to the advent of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ as well. When this *āyah* was revealed, the pagans of Makkah, who were looking for the slightest excuse to mock the Prophet ﷺ, did not find this name strange, and they did not say, "We do not know what Masjid al-Aqsa is." They did not reject the title of it being called a Masjid, and this indicates that this name was known to them.

Scholars of the Arabic language indicate that the term "Masjid" is a word that was already established among pre-Islamic Arabs. It simply referred to "a place wherein people prostrate", and any place of worship was considered a masjid. Islam, even before the advent of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, included prostration to Allāh in prayer in the Sharīʿah of the Prophets sent before.

Palestine has been home to some of the greatest minds and scholars in our history رحمهم الله. Some of these are:

1. Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī (204 AH / 820 CE): Founder of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*. Born in Gaza.
2. Imam al-Nasā'ī (303 AH / 916 CE): Author of *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*. Died in Ramla.
3. ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Maqdisī (600 AH / 1204 CE): Author of *al-ʿUmdah fī al-Aḥkām*.
4. Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī (620 AH / 1223 CE): Author of *Kitāb al-Mughnī*. Born in Jammaʿīl near Jerusalem.
5. Abū Shāmah ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Maqdisī (665 AH / 1267 CE): Author of *Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn*. Historian of Ayyubid and Crusader periods.
6. Ibn ʿAbd al-Qawī al-Maqdisī, Abū ʿAbdillāh (699 AH / 1300 CE): Author of *Manẓūmat al-Ādāb*.
7. Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Maqdisī (744 AH / 1343 CE): Author of *al-Muḥarrar fī al-Ḥadīth*.
8. Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (748 AH / 1348 CE): Author of *Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalā'*. His family roots go back to Ashkelon.
9. Ibn Mufliḥ al-Maqdisī (763 AH / 1362 CE): Author of *Kitāb al-Furūʿ*.
10. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (852 AH / 1449 CE): Author of *Fatḥ al-Bārī*. His family roots go back to Ashkelon.
11. Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ramlī (al-Shāfiʿī al-Ṣaghīr) (957 AH / 1550 CE):

Author of *Nihāyat al-Muḥtāj*. From Ramla.

12. Mūsá al-Ḥajjāwī (968 AH / 1561 CE): Author of *Zād al-Mustaqniʿ*.
13. Marʿī ibn Yūsuf al-Karmī (1033 AH / 1624 CE): Author of *Ghāyat al-Muntahá*. From Tulkarm.
14. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Saffārīnī (1188 AH / 1774 CE): Author of *Lawāmiʿ al-Anwār al-Bahīyah*. Born in Saffarin, near Tulkarm.
15. Khayr al-Dīn al-Ramlī (1081 AH / 1670 CE): Author of *al-Fatāwá al-Khayrīyah*. He was born in Ramla.
16. Mūsá al-Qaddūmī al-Nābulusī (1336 AH / 1918 CE): Author of *Kitāb al-Ajwibah al-Jalīyah*. From Nablus.

The Virtues of al-Shām

Starting with the Arabian Peninsula at large, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "Shayṭān has despaired of being worshipped by those who engage in prayer in the Arabian Peninsula but (has not lost hope) in creating dissension among them." [Muslim]

Allāh says about the Blessed Lands,

وَٱلتِّينِ وَٱلزَّيْتُونِ ۝١

By the fig and the olive (of Jerusalem) [Sūrat al-Tīn, 95:1]

As Muslims, we can take an oath only by Allāh and nothing else. On the other hand, Allāh can take an oath by whatever He Wishes. When Allāh takes an oath on something, it is to place immense importance on it or to highlight its great significance. Scholars of Tafsīr like Imams Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, Qatādah, Ibn Zayd رحمهم الله, and others have said about this *āyah* that, "It is the Masjid of Jerusalem (Bayt al-Maqdis)." The 'fig' and the 'olive' symbolize the lands in which these trees are predominantly found: that is, the lands of al-Shām and specifically Palestine. Imam Qatādah رحمه الله said, "The fig is the mountain upon which Damascus stands, and the olive is the mountain upon which Bayt al-Maqdis stands." This was the land of the Prophets عليهم السلام, as a large number of them lived, taught, preached, and were buried here.

Another interpretation of this and the following *āyāt* is that Allāh is taking an oath on these places to signify their connection to Prophets Mūsá عليه السلام, ʿĪsá عليه السلام, and our beloved Muḥammad ﷺ. This second interpretation also, in a way, supports the first one that talks about the importance of these lands.

Zayd ibn Thābit رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, "How blessed is al-Shām"! We (The Companions) asked, "Why is that"? The Messenger ﷺ replied, "I see the Angels of Allāh spreading their wings over al-Shām". [Al-Tirmidhī]

Imam Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī ﷺ said, "It should be understood that the blessing in al-Shām extends to blessings in both religious and worldly affairs. This is why it has been called al-Arḍ al-Muqaddasah (the Holy Land). One of the greatest virtues of al-Shām is that it is a land of Jihād. Its people devote themselves to striving on the path of Allah and to guarding the frontiers. Thus, whatever they spend of themselves and their wealth for the sake of Allah is multiplied many times over.

It has also been narrated that Abū al-Dardā' ﷺ wrote to Salmān al-Fārisī ﷺ, saying, 'Come to the Holy Land — the land of Jihād.' Likewise, the early generations used to prefer residing there so they could assist in Jihād. As a result of this, the conquest of the city of Qaysāriyyah (Caesarea) was achieved." [Faḍā'il al-Shām]

Allāh mentions the Blessed Lands multiple times in the Quran. Some are:

يَٰقَوۡمِ ٱدۡخُلُواْ ٱلۡأَرۡضَ ٱلۡمُقَدَّسَةَ ٱلَّتِي كَتَبَ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمۡ وَلَا تَرۡتَدُّواْ عَلَىٰٓ أَدۡبَارِكُمۡ فَتَنقَلِبُواْ خَٰسِرِينَ ٢١

(Mūsá said) O my people! Enter the Holy Land which Allāh has Destined for you (to enter). And do not turn back or else you will become losers. [Sūrat al-Mā'idah, 5:21]

The land is called the Holy Land here. "Al-Muqaddas" would also mean that which has been blessed. Allāh is Al-Quddūs, meaning The Most Holy or The Most Sacred. One of the main aspects of this Name is that Allāh Alone is the One Who Blesses. No one has an unchecked claim on Allāh's Bounty and Blessings. Allāh Gives to whom He Wills and Takes it away from whom He Wills. The land in many narrations has been referred to as Bayt al-Maqdis (The Sanctified House) or al-Bayt al-Muqaddas (The House that has been made Holy or Blessed). Even in Hebrew, Jerusalem is known as Yerushalayim or Urushalim which means peace or something that denotes completeness.

It is one of the most fertile lands, home to the blessed olive trees, home to so many Prophets and Messengers of Allāh ﷺ throughout the centuries, and has given the Ummah some of the greatest luminaries and scholars, and it will be this land where many of the Signs of the Last Hour will occur.

وَنَجَّيۡنَٰهُ وَلُوطًا إِلَى ٱلۡأَرۡضِ ٱلَّتِي بَٰرَكۡنَا فِيهَا لِلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ٧١

And We Delivered him and Lūṭ to the land which We had Blessed for the worlds. [Sūrat al-Anbiyā', 21:71]

وَأَوْرَثْنَا ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَانُوا۟ يُسْتَضْعَفُونَ مَشَـٰرِقَ ٱلْأَرْضِ وَمَغَـٰرِبَهَا ٱلَّتِى بَـٰرَكْنَا فِيهَا ۖ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ عَلَىٰ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا۟ ۖ وَدَمَّرْنَا مَا كَانَ يَصْنَعُ فِرْعَوْنُ وَقَوْمُهُۥ وَمَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

And We Caused the people who had been oppressed to inherit the eastern regions of the land and the western ones, which We had Blessed. [Sūrat al-Aʿrāf, 7:137]

وَلَقَدْ بَوَّأْنَا بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ مُبَوَّأَ صِدْقٍ وَرَزَقْنَـٰهُم مِّنَ ٱلطَّيِّبَـٰتِ فَمَا ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ جَآءَهُمُ ٱلْعِلْمُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِى بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَـٰمَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا۟ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾

Indeed, We settled the Children of Israel in a blessed land and granted them good, lawful provisions. [Sūrat Yūnus, 10:93]

وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ ٱلْقُرَى ٱلَّتِى بَـٰرَكْنَا فِيهَا قُرًى ظَـٰهِرَةً وَقَدَّرْنَا فِيهَا ٱلسَّيْرَ ۖ سِيرُوا۟ فِيهَا لَيَالِىَ وَأَيَّامًا ءَامِنِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

We had also placed between them and the cities (of Shām) which We showered with blessings (many small) towns within sight of one another. [Sūrat Saba', 34:18]

وَلِسُلَيْمَـٰنَ ٱلرِّيحَ عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِى بِأَمْرِهِۦٓ إِلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ ٱلَّتِى بَـٰرَكْنَا فِيهَا ۚ وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَـٰلِمِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

And to Sulaymān (We Subjected) the wind, blowing forcefully, proceeding by his command toward the land which We had Blessed. And We are ever, of all things, Knowing. [Sūrat al-Anbiyā', 21:81]

From these *āyāt* of the Quran alone, we learn that the land of al-Shām is uniquely blessed. It is the region to which Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام migrated, the land where Bani Israel were brought after their trials, the site of Prophet Sulaymān's عليه السلام unmatched kingdom, the route traversed by the people of Saba, and the destination of the miraculous Night Journey of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Al-Shām is also home to Mount Sinai, where Allāh Spoke to Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام and revealed the Tawrah. Within Shām lies Masjid Al-Aqsa, a blessed site that has been the center of prophethood for centuries.

Scholars through the centuries, including the likes of Imams Ibn ʿAsākir, Abū aI-Ḥasan al-Rubʿī, Shaykh aI-Islām Ibn Taymīyah, Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī, Ibn Rajab al-ḤanbaIī رحمهم الله, and many others, have authored works on the merits and virtues of al-Shām. It was narrated that Abū Umāmah رضي الله عنه narrated, "I said, 'O Prophet of Allāh, what was the beginning of your affair?' He said, 'The prayer of my father Ibrāhīm and the glad tidings of ʿĪsá. My mother dreamt that there came out of her light by which the palaces of al-Shām were illuminated.'" [Musnad Aḥmad]

Imam Ibn Kathīr ﵀ said, "The fact that al-Shām is singled out in conjunction with his light indicates that his religion and his teachings will abide in the land of al-Shām. Hence at the end of time, al-Shām and its people will be a stronghold for Islam, and in that land ʿĪsá ibn Maryam will come down." [Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr]

Ibn Masʿūd ﵁ was once told that the water in the Euphrates river was subsiding, so he said, "Water and believers will always be found in al-Shām." [Mustadrak Al-Ḥākim]

The Prophet ﷺ said, "O Allāh! Bestow Your blessings on our Shām! O Allāh! Bestow Your blessings on our Yemen." The people said, "And also on our Najd (land around Iraq)." He said, "O Allāh! Bestow Your blessings on our Shām! O Allāh! Bestow Your blessings on our Yemen." The people said, "O Allah's Apostle! And also on our Najd." The narrator said, "I think the third time the Prophet ﷺ said, 'That (Najd) is the place of earthquakes and afflictions, and from there comes out the side of the head of Shayṭān.'" [Al-Bukhārī]

The health of the Ummah was also linked to al-Shām. Imam al-Tirmidhī ﵀ records that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "When the inhabitants of al-Shām become corrupt, then there is no good in it for you. There will never cease to be a group in my Ummah who will be helped (by Allah), they will not be harmed by those who forsake them until the Hour is established." ʿAlī ibn al-Madīnī ﵀ said. 'They are the people of Hadith.'" [Al-Tirmidhī]

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "The chosen land of Allāh is al-Shām, and in it are his chosen people and servants. A group from my nation will certainly enter paradise without any reckoning or punishment." [Al-Ṭabarānī]

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "I saw on the night of al-Isrā' wa al-Miʿrāj, a white pillar resembling a pearl which the Angels were carrying. I asked them, 'What are you carrying?' They said, 'The Pillar of the Book, we have been ordered to place it in al-Shām.' Later in my sleep, I saw the Pillar of the Book being taken away from under my headrest. I began to fear lest Allāh the Almighty had abandoned the people of the earth. My eyes followed the Pillar of the Book. It was a brilliant light in front of me. Then I saw it was placed in al-Shām." [Al-Ṭabarānī]

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "While I was sleeping, I saw that the Pillar of the Book was taken from beneath my head. I thought it was being removed, so I followed it with my gaze, and it was placed in al-Shām. Verily, faith (*Īmān*) will be in al-Shām when tribulations occur." [Aḥmad]

In a similar narration, the Prophet ﷺ said, "I saw angels in a dream who had taken hold of the Pillar of the Book and proceeded with it to al-Shām.

When the great tribulations befall, faith will be in al-Shām." [Ibn ʿAsākir]

These hadiths signify the centrality of al-Shām in preserving Islamic teachings and the Quran.

NOTE: "The Pillar of the Book" probably refers to the cylindrical containers used at the time, in which letters or documents written in scroll format were put for safekeeping. Allāh Knows Best.

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah ﵀ explained, "The Pillar of the Book and Islam" – this refers to something that acts as a support; what is referred to here is those who learn the Quran and adhere to it. This is similar to the words of the Prophet ﷺ, 'The heartland of the believers is al-Shām.'" [Majmūʿ al-Fatāwá]

A Companion named Tamīm ibn Aws al-Dārī ﵁ accepted Islam in 9H and eventually settled in Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). It is narrated from multiple sources that Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ had allocated Bayt Ḥabrūn or Hebron to him. He came with his people to the Prophet ﷺ and asked him to allocate Hebron to him. The Prophet ﷺ agreed and had a document written for him that said, "In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. This is what Muḥammad the Messenger of Allāh has given to Tamīm al-Dārī and his companions. I give to you Bayt ʿAynūn, Ḥabrūn, al-Marṭm, and Bayt Ibrāhīm and all that is in them; I give that to them and to their descendants forever and ever. Whoever disputes with them concerning that is offending Allāh. Witnessed by Abū Bakr ibn Abī Quḥāfah, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib." [Muʿjam al-Buldān]

At the time this document was drafted, Palestine was not under Muslim control; rather, it was ruled by the Byzantines. This was a prophecy that Palestine would soon be under Muslim rule. When Bayt al-Maqdis was conquered during the reign of ʿUmar ﵁, he fulfilled the promise of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ to Tamīm ﵁ and gave the land as a *waqf* to his descendants. This was the first *waqf* in Palestine by the Muslims (not counting Masjid al-Aqsa). Tamīm al-Dārī ﵁ would later be appointed as the Governor of Jerusalem as well.

Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is telling all these things to his companions when the lands of al-Shām and Jerusalem are still under Persian or Roman control. The lives of the Companions revolved primarily around Makkah and then Madīnah. Yet, the Prophet ﷺ was emphasizing the blessings and status of this land. This can give us an indication as to why the areas of al-Shām were some of the earliest places where the Companions set out to spread Islam. Imam Ibn Abī Dāwūd ﵀ recorded that al-Walīd ibn Muslim ﵀ said, "Ten thousand eyes that had witnessed the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ

entered the land of al-Shām." [Tārīkh Dimashq]

At the request of the people of al-Shām, ʿUmar sent Muʿādh ibn Jabal, Abū al-Dardāʾ, and ʿUbādah ibn al-Ṣāmit ﵃ to al-Shām. ʿUbādah ibn al-Ṣāmit ﵁ and his wife Umm Ḥarām bint Milḥān ﵂ settled in Palestine, where he taught the people the Quran and the hadiths of the Prophet ﷺ. The last hadith that he narrated was in Palestine just before he passed away.

Al-Ṣunābiḥiyy ﵁ regarding ʿUbādah ibn al-Ṣāmit ﵁ narrated, "I visited him while he was on his deathbed, so I cried, and he said, 'There now, why are you crying? For by Allāh, if I am a martyr, then I will intercede for you, and if I can, I will benefit you.' He then said, 'By Allāh! There is no hadith which I heard from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ which is good for you, but I narrate it to you today, while I am near death. I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say,

مَنْ شَهِدَ أَنْ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللهِ حَرَّمَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ النَّارَ.

'Whoever testifies that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, then Allāh has forbidden the fire for him.'" [Al-Tirmidhī]

ʿUbādah was appointed as the first Chief Judge of Jerusalem by ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﵁ and to date, his descendants live in Palestine.

We see that a plethora of the Companions were buried in al-Shām. To name a few: Khālid ibn al-Walīd, Nuʿmān ibn Bashīr, and Thawbān ﵃, among others, are buried in Homs. Shaddād ibn Aws and ʿUbādah ibn al-Ṣāmit ﵃ are buried in the immediate vicinity of Masjid al-Aqsa. Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān and Diḥyah ibn Khalīfah al-Kalbī ﵃ are buried in Damascus. Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ ﵁ is buried in Aleppo, while Muʿādh ibn Jabal and Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib ﵃ are buried around modern-day Jordan. Others from the Companions who visited Jerusalem include ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Abū ʿUbaydah ʿĀmir ibn al-Jarrāḥ, Ṣafīyah bint Ḥuyayy, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar, Abū al-Dardā, Salmān al-Farsī, ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, Saʿīd ibn Zayd, and ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr ﵃, among many others.

Imam al-Bukhārī ﵀ placed a chapter in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* and titled it, "Whoever desired to be buried in the Sacred Land." Under this chapter, he brings the famous hadith of Prophet Mūsā ﵇.

Abū Hurayrah ﵁ narrated that the Angel of Death was sent to Mūsá, and when he went to him, Mūsá slapped him severely, spoiling one of his eyes. The Angel went back to his Lord and said, "You sent me to a slave who does not want to die." Allāh restored his eye and said, "Go back and tell him (i.e. Mūsá) to place his hand over the back of an ox, for he will be allowed

to live for a number of years equal to the number of hairs under his hand." (So the Angel came to him and told him the same). Then Mūsá asked, "O my Lord! What will be then?" He said, "Death will be then." He said, "(Let it be) now." He asked Allāh to bring him near the Sacred Land at a distance of a stone's throw. Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said, "Were I there, I would show you the grave of Mūsá by the way near the red sand hill." [Al-Bukhārī]

From the proofs of true prophethood, we see a true prophecy. Shaddād ibn Aws رضي الله عنه reports that he was with the Prophet ﷺ whilst taking deep breaths. The Prophet ﷺ said, "What is wrong, O Shaddād?" He said, "The world has closed in on me". The Prophet ﷺ said, "The world has not closed in on you. Verily, al-Shām will be conquered and al-Quds will be conquered, and you and your sons will be Imams there, if Allāh wills." [Al-Ṭabarānī]

Shaddād ibn Aws رضي الله عنه would go on to become a leading figure in the Conquest of al-Shām and eventually al-Quds during the caliphate of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه. He passed away in 58H at the age of 75 and was buried near Masjid al-Aqsa.

Dr Usamah al-Asqar, a famous Palestinian author and historian, writes that, as per his research, around 4,000 Companions entered Palestine, of whom 36 were from the senior Companions or leaders in the Muslim army. Approximately 38 Companions were martyred in Palestine, and 69 settled in Palestine over a period of time.

Al-Shām is and will remain home to the pious and truthful of this Ummah. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "A group of my Ummah will continue to prevail, and they will never be harmed by those who forsake them, until the Hour begins." [Ibn Mājah]

ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd رضي الله عنه said, "The people of al-Shām will not defeat a people except that they are the worst of creation." [Faḍāʾil al-Shām]

In another narration, the Prophet ﷺ said, "The people of the West will remain dominant, unaffected by those who forsake them, until the Hour is established." [Muslim]

Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal رحمه الله explained that the "people of the West" refer to the people of al-Shām, as the Prophet's ﷺ speech must be understood in the context of his location in Madīnah. Imam Aḥmad رحمه الله recorded that Khuraym ibn Fātik al-Asadī رضي الله عنه said, "The people of al-Shām are Allāh's whip on Earth, by which He exacts retribution from whomsoever He wills, however He wills. It is forbidden for their hypocrites to prevail over their believers, and they will not die in a state of worry, distress, or grief." [Aḥmad]

ʿAbdullāh ibn Zurayr al-Ghāfiqī said: I heard ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه say, "There shall be a fitnah from which people shall be extracted as gold

is extracted from ore; so do not curse the people of al-Shām, but curse the oppressors from them. That is because among them are the Abdāl. Allāh shall send upon them rain from the sky that shall drown them, such that they would even be beaten by foxes if they were to engage in combat.

Then, Allāh shall send at that point a man from the Prophet's ﷺ household among an army that is, at worst, 12,000 in number and, at best, 15,000 in number. Their emblem shall be, 'bring death, bring death, bring death (amit, amit, amit)!' on three banners. They shall be fought by a people of seven banners, and each of the seven leaders beneath those banners would be in pursuit of kingship. They shall fight and be beaten, and the Hashemite will then prevail. Allāh would then return to the people their cordiality and blessing, and they shall remain upon that until the advent of the Dajjāl." [Al-Mustadrak]

NOTE: The Abdāl could refer to the group of righteous believers who shall remain prevalent upon the truth in al-Shām till the arrival of Allāh's Command. There are no authentic traditions that explicitly quote the Prophet ﷺ speaking of the Abdāl. Allāh Knows best.

While Makkah is the origin and the "Mother of Cities," from which the earth spread forth, al-Shām holds the distinction of being the place where people will be gathered towards the end of times, fulfilling its role as the ultimate destination in the Divine Plan. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Al-Shām is the land of the gathering and the resurrection." [Aḥmad]. It is here that Prophet ʿĪsá عليه السلام will return. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "ʿĪsá, the son of Maryam, will descend at the white minaret in the eastern side of Damascus, wearing two garments lightly dyed and placing his hands on the wings of two angels. When he lowers his head, there would fall drops of water from his head, and when he raises it up, drops like pearls would scatter from it." [Muslim]

Similarly, the spread of Islam began with the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ being taken from Makkah to Jerusalem. His prophethood and his message began in Makkah, and the perfection, dominance, and completion of his religion will occur with the coming of the Mahdi in al-Shām.

Kaʿb al-Aḥbār رحمه الله was a famous Jewish scholar who accepted Islam during the caliphate of either Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq or ʿUmar al-Fārūq رضي الله عنهما. Citing the Scriptures of the People of the Book, Kaʿb al-Aḥbār narrated many virtues of al-Shām. A few of these are:

– "Indeed, Allāh the Blessed and Exalted has blessed al-Shām from the Euphrates to al-ʿArīsh (in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt)."

- "The people of al-Shām are a sword among the swords of Allāh, through whom Allāh takes vengeance on those who disobey Him in His land."
- Once Kaʿb advised a man, "Go to al-Shām, for whatever blessings are diminished in the lands, they are increased in al-Shām."
- In another narration, Kaʿb saw a man and asked him, "From which people are you?" He replied, "I am from the people of al-Shām." Kaʿb said, "Perhaps you are from the soldiers whose martyrs intercede for seventy." The man asked, "Who are they?" Kaʿb said, "The people of Hims." The man replied, "No." Kaʿb continued, "Then perhaps you are from the soldiers who will be recognized in Paradise by their green garments." The man asked, "Who are they?" Kaʿb said, "The people of Damascus." The man replied, "No." Kaʿb said, "Then perhaps you are from the soldiers who will be shaded under the Throne of Allāh Almighty on the Day of Resurrection." The man asked, "Who are they?" Kaʿb said, "The people of Jordan." The man replied, "No." Kaʿb said, "Then perhaps you are from the soldiers whom your Lord looks upon twice a day." The man asked, "Who are they?" Kaʿb said, "The people of Palestine." The man replied, "Yes."
- "The first wall placed on the surface of the Earth after the flood (of Prophet Nūḥ ﷺ) was the wall of Harran, Damascus, and Babylon." [Faḍāʾil al-Shām wa Dimashq]

Imam Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī ﷺ mentioned narrations from Imam Aḥmad ﷺ regarding the virtue of relocating to al-Shām after Makkah and Madīnah, and then said, "The sum of what has been transmitted from Imam Aḥmad is that it is recommended to reside in al-Shām and to move one's children and family to its strongholds, such as Damascus. As for its outskirts and frontier regions that are close to the coasts, it is not recommended to reside there with one's family due to the fear of raids by the disbelievers. Rather, it is recommended to remain there for guarding the borders (ribāṭ), without relocating women and children. The closer any of its towns are to the coastal borders and the greater the fear, the more disliked it becomes to move one's family there. As for the hadiths mentioning the virtues of al-Shām, they are not, according to him, specific to its frontier regions alone, but rather they apply generally to all of the land of al-Shām, such as Bayt al-Maqdis and its surroundings, Damascus, and other areas. And Allāh, the Exalted, knows best." [Faḍāʾil al-Shām]

O Muslims, heed the words of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyah ﷺ who

said, "If you forsake the people of al-Shām, neither supporting them nor defending them, then Allāh will mobilize for them others who will support them! He'll replace you with others! Allāh says,

هَـٰٓأَنتُمْ هَـٰٓؤُلَآءِ تُدْعَوْنَ لِتُنفِقُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ فَمِنكُم مَّن يَبْخَلُ ۖ وَمَن يَبْخَلْ فَإِنَّمَا يَبْخَلُ عَن نَّفْسِهِۦ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ ٱلْغَنِىُّ وَأَنتُمُ ٱلْفُقَرَآءُ ۚ وَإِن تَتَوَلَّوْا۟ يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوٓا۟ أَمْثَـٰلَكُم ﴿٣٨﴾

And if you turn away (refuse), He'll replace you with another people, and they won't be like you. [Sūrat Muḥammad, 47:38]

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ called it "Our Shām", and so we'll call it our Shām as well. Shām is the Land of the Prophets; its soil and its people are blessed by the *du'ā'* of the Prophet ﷺ:

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي شَامِنَا.

"O Allāh, bestow *barakah* on our Shām." [Al-Tirmidhī]